FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume XX, Number 2, April 1969

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

This is a personal letter. One carbon copy is being kept just for my own reference.

From a life-time of prayer in many forms, places and under different situations—I frankly think we should jump right squarely into the hardest, for me, field of prayer: prayer with the sick. Note I say "with" not "for." Prayers *for* the sick are personal prayers offered in private homes, private hospital rooms, semi-private hospital rooms, rooms with many people, in nursing homes, etc.

I believe we need guidelines to assist laymen and laywomen in *what* to pray. I firmly believe many, many people would offer prayer with the sick if they had some definite idea of what to pray. Prayer that would not upset the sick patient, or anyone else within hearing distance.

This type of prayer must be brief, and to condense thought into concise form is not easy.

I do not think we could get very far with thoughts on this theme from one person, but I believe if some thoughtful person would take all ideas presented on this theme and prayerfully assemble them into definite guidelines, we could make progress.

I offer this as a suggestion. I have made no attempt to "polish" this letter. I hope I have made myself clear.

The need exists. Are we awake to the challenge?

— *Ray A. Albert*

EDITORIAL

Since this publication was created—in 1950—by the founder of Fellowship in Prayer, there have been, including the founder himself, four editors. Anyone leafing through the issues of it put out during the succeeding nineteen-plus years would be surprised, I think, to find the evenness of tone in the contributions of almost two decades and the touching likeness of the basic message of all our contributors. In discussing an issue (in December of this year) which would celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the fellowship, we in the office have leafed through back-issues and found, with satisfaction, that although times change, and styles and formats and fashions keep on varying as much as ladies' hemlines or men's hats, our message has survived like a rock. We began, in our first issue, to speak of the necessity of prayer. We have, in all succeeding issues, no matter who the editor, continued to speak of the same necessity. And we will go on to speak of it in the issues yet to be produced.

This is not to denigrate the role of the editor, whoever he or she may be. It is rather to congratulate the continuity of the fellowship in the hearts of those who write for the publication, those who support it, those who read it. For there is no way for an editor to produce a publication unless the contributions are sent to him—unless, that is, the hearts of those who write the poems, articles, meditations, and so forth, are moved by their own private sense of the need for prayer in this world.

THREADS TO MUSIC

Howard G. Hanson

The soul's music is a long thin wail
probing past the sphere of known
and granted things; the heart, of dust and frail,
stifles, will not stoop to groan,

but murmurs in its comfort through the coil
that pain is short and loving long.
Slow angels wind the wailing on a spool
and draw the humming heart to song.

NO POLAR STAR

Howard G. Hanson

The light is gone behind its bar
though I still travel north;
a railroad needs no Polar Star
to find its compass forth.

But here's a moveless cell that runs,
nor turns aside at all
to measure God's slow-setting suns
or smell some rose-blown wall.

I can not love to ride on rows
that only get somewhere;
the meaning's in the how one goes,
not in the reaching there.

THE CHERRY TREE

Catherine Cabeen Houck

Slim young saplings whisper, whisper:
"How lovely you are dear sister,
How beguiling you look in green."
Silk rustling against silk.
Tossing their shimmering jade-green leaves,
flexing their tapered limbs,
they look in strange disblief
at the dark, rough body of the old cherry tree.
Aware of their own smooth grace
they wonder in sibilation why she remains
amidst their youthful beauty.
One alone, sensing pity
tries to imagine what the old one
was like when she was young—
"Surely, not as beautiful as we."
The sky reflects its blue self
in the clear woodland stream
while the saplings, too far from its banks
to see themselves, stretch to tip-toe height
and see only a pale greenness at the edge.
Startled they look again—
What is this whiteness,
this fair reflection of starry blossoms,
what forest beauty is mirrored here?
Only the sapling with the pitying heart
lifts her eyes above herself
and bowing low, droops her leaves,
silver-green tears,
ashamed that she has not discerned
the secret of the cherry tree.

THE PHENOMENON OF SILENCE

Wade Van Dore

In a northern wilderness where rocks stand like visible masses of eternity in a fixation of loneliness, silence, sometimes defined as a negation of sound, may enlarge in the consciousness of an adventurer until it becomes an almost overpowering *presence.* Then the sense of hearing, having nothing to hear, may almost break with the effort to attain an island of sound. So the mind must give it support. Thought must face silence and rationalize its paradoxical "non-entity" status—come to the conclusion that in some undetected manner, it is at least a sub-element related to the usually more noticeable elements of earth, air, water, and fire. Then, as all these commingle and become as a single dazzling jewel of reality, the human attendant may be more at ease with silence.

In a forest intense with silence, a camper may have the feeling that each tree is expanding the principle that governs the growth of plants. In the green balance of its being, every tree would appear to pulse with more than the happiness of having leaves. And flowers and ferns seem to transcend boundaries assigned to them. Everything seems to stand in a devout attitude of listening—not so much for a vibration of sound as for some pronouncement from the kingdom of silence where all the unseen and unheard entities dwell. If that pronouncement is not within the human range of hearing and understanding, we probably could surmise the burden of its message. I think this might well be an admonishment to every sentient thing to pay tribute to its source.

Physics is a fascinating science to those who go to it with an unfettered imagination. To Einstein, "pure thought" (as tenuous as silence) was a marvelous tool, and he said: "In a certain sense I hold it to be true that pure thought can grasp reality as the ancients dreamed it." He also said: "There is sublime harmony in the realms of thought." Thought functions silently—it seems to be a form of silence.

But is silence thought? I would like to suggest that, as mass equals energy, so silence may equal thought. And how exciting it would be if a physicist by means of an equation could first state, then prove by demonstration, that this is so!

For centuries before Einstein made the disclosure, the close relationship of matter and energy remained unknown to us. We constantly stood on, slept on, and ate matter without knowing about the latent power of atoms hidden beneath the mundane appearance of a clod of earth, a rock, a board, a loaf of bread. And we still spend our days "brushing elbows" with great unknowns that may be constituted of particles which, far down in an unknown scale of smallness, remain beyond the capability of our instruments.

Who knows but that silence or some other unsung quality, such as darkness, may be the key to either absolute smallness or ultimate largeness? Science-thinking and research have become sophisticated, and our means of learning have, in part, become translated into our ability to think or dream clues that are too tenuous to make an imprint upon our physical senses.

In the past, silence has been called golden; but now, in and near our cities, it has become something almost too expensive to buy. We cannot truly enjoy a conversation, a picture, or the delicacy of a flower in noise. Even far outside of cities, in what appears to be country, there is hardly enough silence or quietness left to set off delicate sounds. A distant roar of traffic blots the harmonious humming of bees, rustlings of leaves, or a stir in grass made by a leaping or flying grasshopper. And in the way that these sounds slowly become lost to us, so do our thoughts in noise get side-tracked or lost, or become smudged and frustrated.

Every autumn in New England there are Foliage Excursions; and now we can foresee the possibility of Silence Tours to wilderness areas where man-made noise will be prohibited, where quiet-loving citizens may go to silence in a setting of nature, and perhaps hear some of the delightful small sounds that are lost to those who live in thickly populated areas.

We already have a noise-restricted reservation in northeastern Minnesota which would be very suitable for this purpose. Established primarily for canoeists who greatly appreciate quietness while paddling through and camping in wilderness, it would be just the place for those who love quietness and silence for its own sake. This is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, which adjoins Quetico Park to the north in Canada. I have camped and lived just north of this area, where clear water of lakes almost equals the acreage of lakes almost equals the acreage of green forests braced and nurtured by a rocky terrain.

So still it is in that country, silence must seem like a mother to all the furred creatures. For when the wind gets tired of blowing, silence returns, to cover, as with a soft quilt, water, trees, and all the curves of the land with its richness. Quietness or silence is the characteristic identifying quality embedded in the very atmosphere of that sector of the Province of Ontario.

Though silence here is a gift of gentleness, it is as much in evidence as a black crevice in a great cliff of stone. And it is more insistent than any sound. There an Indian may beat a drum or fire a gun, but, after the echoes have returned from exquisitely shaped and placed lake islands, the glass of the silence is as clear and deep as ever.

This, then, is silence: a presence basically as constant as gravity; a cosmological yielding force that through eternity is able to adjust itself, heal itself after sustaining the most wearing action of sound; a connecting agent—one we are certain connects us with all the worlds and stars. Silence may never answer a question put to it by a human, but it does offer the most inviting invitation ever presented to those of us in voice to speak!

—*From Sunrise*

HIDDEN PRAYERS

Hidden prayers can be anything. Even "Hello, there"!

Amazing!!

— *Margaret Davis*
(Age 10)

LITTLE GIRL'S BEDTIME PRAYER

Alice Richmond

God, Dear, listen for my prayer tonight:
Your Love-smiles share, call down to bless
My wee bed trustful where I sleep....
Let thoughts of Good, like flowers pretty,
Your prayers drop as covering warm
That Mother sweet, about me curls
Pressing her hands: dear and lovely.

Please, tender, let Your Hands remember
Your child hold firm through night-stars' shine,
With gladness fold me soft around
Like a new darling dream, Father, kindly....
To all the children sleeping now
Oh nearer bring Your Love, please Lord,
And to me, Cathie: praying so grateful.

TREE OF LIFE

Carla Patsuris

I saw the vine
Loosed from the tree
Wither and fall;
Understanding came to me:

Parted from Source
Cut from Supply
Measure by measure
Broken branches die.

PRAYER PILGRIMAGE

(Thoughts at Easter Sunrise Service)

In glowing spectrum of Easter dawn,
blended with Nature's bloom array,
the pious of varied race and sect
ascend the shrines of stone and clay,
    adroitly mounted emerald gems
    in settings of April's diadems.

With spirits wrapped in robes of faith,
ascending the hallowed, cross-crowned peak,
they chant great hymns and psalms of praise
to Him who lifts the strong and weak,
    while Nature fashions new modes of spring
    for myriads sheltered beneath her wing.

Where are your crowns, cruel Caesars of old,
subduers of nations by fire and blight.
Arise from gilded, forgotten graves
and watch the advent of peaceful might:
    those unarmed vanguards of love's vast fleet
    who challenge the haters, who never retreat.

Reopen your eyes, cataracted by greed,
to see the grandeur that is God's
and all the marvels conceived by Man.
Lend ears, once deafened by firing squads,
    to hear the Prophet's paternal cry
    acclaimed by multitudes—low and high.

Pray, pilgrims, pray! Forever peace in sight.
Your prayers are heard. Love will, Love must unite!

— *Aarno Davidson*

RETIREMENT OR RECRUITMENT?

by F. Bernadette Turner

Our interpretation of "retirement" should be carefully considered.

For many, retirement is a terrifying experience. They go to bed one night, an important cog in the productive wheel, and wake up the next morning, sixty-five years of age, completely outside the productive world. To soften the blow, the "bow out" is usually accompanied by a few amenities. Often fellow employees take up a collection, give a farewell dinner, present the senior citizen with a gold watch . . . and he is on his own. Literally catapulted into the abyss of retirement, he may be wholly unprepared, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually, to adjust to a new life style.

Many think of old age as the slowing down of the flesh, speaking literally, without considering the quickening of the Spirit. I recall reading one time that an American is a person who, if he misses one section of a revolving door in the morning, is disgruntled all day. Time changes things. People of more advanced years leave the revolving door to those of nimbler feet. But there are compensations. As one door closes, another opens. The older person may walk down the avenue a little more leisurely, but he may see more along the way. To "retire" means to withdraw, retreat, or recede. Retirement, so defined, becomes stagnation. To "recruit," on the other hand, means to strengthen, to restore or reinforce. What a mistake it is to think of the time following our peak productive years as a dead-end street instead of an opportunity to slow down and look up, pulling together what we have learned from experience. It leaves us vulnerable to feelings of deep despair.

Most mature people have

lost loved ones and friends. Many have lost not only physical function (hearing, sight, mobility) but a diminution of mental alertness as well. Some have suffered a dwindling in financial resources which adds to their despair. Consequently, it is not uncommon for people in their later years to entertain recurring thoughts of utter rejection, uselessness, futility.

If we have never given time to our relationship with God or tapped our Inner resources, "from whence cometh my help," age may be a terrifying experience, indeed. Loneliness is a result of separation from God; separation from God, as Divine Scientists know, is man's real problem. In our jet-propelled lives, we are so wrapped up in ourselves—our jobs, our friends, our relatives, and our things—that we may not have time for God. It is little wonder, then, that many move into their sunset years taking nothing of lasting value with them.

How deeply grateful we should be for Divine Science, which helps the retired person form a proper outlook on his new position in life. Through this teaching, we interpret the slowing down of the flesh and the quickening of the Spirit as the process of spiritual unfoldment, the movement from preoccupation with material concerns to an established consciousness of the presence of God. This is accomplished through meditation and practice. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." *(Romans 8:5)*

Our later years should be welcomed as a time of recruitment, a pooling of our accumulated wisdom, a time to discover latent talents, a time to develop new ideas, a time to grow spiritually until our love encompasses the whole wide world. Age should be a rewarding period of reflection and quiet hope. The great God of heaven and earth is with us always, everywhere, and life is eternal.

—*from ASPIRE TO BETTER LIVING.*

)USE UPON A HILL

Belle Heins

)use upon the grassy hill,
Abandoned, sad and old;
What memories your corridors
And lonely rooms must hold!
You have been stripped of all your pride,
Left silent, cold and bare;
Your walls are marred, the garden gate
)hair.

f merriment,
d gay;
toys and song,

ears ago—
ayer,
filled your rooms
with loving warmth and care.

tand proud and tall
and rain!
blessed is good,
in.

OLD HOUSE UPON A HILL

Esther Belle Heins

Great house upon the grassy hill,
Abandoned, sad and old;
What memories your corridors
And lonely rooms must hold!
You have been stripped of all your pride,
Left silent, cold and bare;
Your walls are marred, the garden gate
Bound fast with maidenhair.

Dream on, old house, of merriment,
Of curtains starched and gay;
Of children's laughter, toys and song,
Dream on of yesterday;
For many times, long years ago—
You heard a childish prayer,
And God's great Spirit filled your rooms
With loving warmth and care.

Dream on, old house, stand proud and tall
Through winter's sleet and rain!
For that which God has blessed is good,
And was not built in vain.

TO SING AGAIN

Emily Sargent Councilman

Too long I failed to use my loss;
tone-deaf, I would not hear
when broken chords might well have made
life's harmonies more clear.

Tonight I listened. The Voice within
resolved an ancient pain,
and broken heart-strings, long since still,
began to sing again.

—MUSIC MINISTRY

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ONE EQUALS ONE

Eternal Father,
Thou whose leveler is love,
Help us
to acknowledge differences
without making of them
distinctive divisions
which prevent our knowing
the fullness of love
both with Thee
and with one another.
Amen.

— *Pollyanna Sedziol*

DAVID REMEMBERS GOD'S MERCY

No, my dear Bathsheba, you can never
Be the woman she was, ever.

When I saw her there
On that last burro,
I did not deem her fair
But only the foul
Wife of Nabal, fool.
When, though, she stood
Up from the burro
And, kneeling in propitiatory sorrow,
Beat her head
Before me on the sod,
I did like the look of her hair.
And you know, dear, how I still like bread,
Mutton, wine, figs and raisins.

But what I liked most
Was her unforced,
Frank admiration.
After my rejection
By Michal, it was salvation
To my loins,
My reins.

That day, that month, that year,
And years afterward, dear,
I knew heaven's grace
Whenever I looked at her face,
Especially her eyes.
God in Abigail
Restored my soul.

— *Kelly Janes*

THE MIND OF CHRIST

In Philippians 2:5, St. Paul said: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." And in Colossians 1:26-27, he speaks of "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: ...which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory."

This Christ mind is the magic, missing ingredient that most of us do not know how to lay hold of. If we did, we would be doing almost daily the works that Jesus did, and even greater works, just as He promised we would.

Psychology teaches that there are two levels of the mind, the conscious or reasoning mind, and the unconscious mind. Some psychologists make a further distinction between the facets of the unconscious: (1) the subconscious mind, which is the seat of memory, has to do with breathing, etc.; and (2) the little-explored area of our mind that seems in a way to be higher than the conscious mind. This part often gives us the answers to questions when we sleep over them, problems we may have wrestled with for days before. They call this latter division the "superconscious mind." It is really in tune with Infinite Mind, with the mind of Christ.

How do we cultivate this higher mind? First let us recognize that it is part and parcel of the immortal spark placed within us at the time of creation, and which really never leaves us. This is pure spirit, or a part of God's holy presence. This is what St. Paul meant when he said, "Christ in you, the hope of Glory." We may even be unaware of this pearl of great price that God has placed within us. But this Divine spark can be fanned into a flame that will literally consume all our negative thoughts and emotions, and we will be manifesting our divine birthright; we will be truly sons of God.

Now this divine spark, this

Christ mind, is completely incapable of anger, fear, or jealousy. The key that unlocks the door to this mind is one word—L-O-V-E. In I John 4: 7-8, we read: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

The one way to approach this is through bringing our own thought processes into harmony with the Christ mind, which is the manifestation of perfect Divine Love. When we do this, we won't have to strive to make demonstrations of healing, of supply, of human relations, or whatever our problems are. We will just naturally be led into the right way.

Jesus Christ epitomized Divine Love completely and He is our model.

However, it is revealing that others in different parts of the world have learned something of the importance and power of love, also. In India there is a certain class of Hindu mystics called Bhakti, or Disciples of Love. They know the power of love to protect and to care for them, and they cultivate it until all nature is in love with and befriends them.

Thousands of the common people of India are killed by serpents and wild animals; yet these mystics have so brought forth the power of love in themselves that serpents and savage animals do not molest them. They live in the wildest jungles; during periods of silent devotion lasting sometimes weeks and even months, they make the open forest their home. Birds have even been known to build nests in the hair of such devotees during their periods of silence. They respect the rights of the tiniest insect, and under no circumstances kill anything or interfere with it in any way.

So we see that when it is put to the practical test, love always proves its Divine origin and power.

—Ministry of Divine Love

CALIFORNIA BEAUTY

Two poems by Zelma S. Dennis

The regal ermine snow cloaks mountain peaks,
That venture into cloud-stirred azure space.
Here is the ageless calm that each man seeks,
When atom-age brings on too swift a pace.

The sand becomes an ivory sea by moon,
Long roads are silver ribbons caught with stars.
The only sound is night-wind's haunting tune
That binds with beauty life's deep-wounding scars.

BROTHERHOOD

by Donna Sherry

"We say to you: Within this next half-century you can make Brotherhood a living reality in this world ... You be all of one blood, one source, one goal. Know this truth and live it."

— A Message from an Elder Brother to Members of The Theosophical Society

The quotation above embodies a pronouncement so direct that a casual reading fails to disclose its startling implications. Meditation will reveal them, as well as the basic truths underlying them— truths perhaps not before recognized by the individual as having any immediate application to himself.

The initial pronouncement is a challenge (as most pronouncements of the wise seem to be). Phrase by phrase, it raises questions that must be answered, it presents ideas to be investigated, it implies hidden truths to be discovered, laws to be understood, capacities to be assessed, before the individual is led to the realization that the statement does directly concern him, that the challenge is to him.

To those who accept the challenge, the final admonition would inevitably represent a stern and solemn charge. In them it would evoke the quality of one-pointedness.

But one-pointedness can become a narrowing influence in the life of the individual and seriously limit his usefulness if it is fixed on an objective alone. In this meditation, however, there will be revealed one-pointedness not only polarized to an objective, but all-inclusive as to factors that need to be understood and used in serving the objective. Here is one-pointedness which draws along into the great flood of its purpose all ideas, all things, all activities that serve the objective: "You be *all* of one blood, one source, one goal."

It is said that one-pointedness consists of holding in perfect balance essence and detail.

The *essence* of Brotherhood is much more than just the relationship of beings. It seems to be of the nature of the Breath of the Universe—the interdependent inflowing and outflowing Breath—a universal cooperative life-sustaining Principle of give and take.

The *detail* of Brotherhood is represented by a social structure, culture, group form, or Law incorporating the give and take of consideration and helpfulness, privilege and opportunity, work and fruits—an outer manifestation of the cooperative life-sustaining Principle.

To hold fast in consciousness to that essence of Brotherhood while creating and implementing its detail of outer form constitutes one-pointedness in relation to "making Brotherhood a living reality in the world."

"You be all of one blood, one source, one goal. Know this truth and live it." To know it is a big undertaking; to live it, a great one. Together they constitute a one-pointedness that cannot fail to make possible achievement of the objective.

"*You* can make Brotherhood a living reality in the world." Fantastic for us to think we could successfully take up the challenge?

— *from The American Theosophist*

ANGUISH PURE

Winifred Hamrick Farrar

Be nailed
Upon the walls
Of muscle called my heart,
O Lord, for I would know
Love's anguish pure,
The smart.
The pain
Upon the cross
You felt for man impart,
To make me human here—
Love's anguish pure,
The smart.

TURN TO GOD

Estelle D. Broadrick

There are few conditions and circumstances that can wholly and totally defeat you, if you have sought the real help, the guidance of God. If you are on the best possible relationship with the Lord, if you are close to Him as you can be, as you should be, then burdens are not unbearable, loneliness is not intense, your thoughts are not fretful nor fearful.

Turn away from the darkness and the bewilderment, that surrounds you. Turn to God. Turn your eyes and your mind, your heart to God. "If thine eye be single, thy whole being shall be filled with light." Consider these words—and let the meaning sink deep into your mind. All powers of grace, patience, endurance, strength and hope are yours. All understanding is yours, all joy, all serenity is yours. This is the promise. God never fails. Turn to God.

Your belief is imperfect, if you are filled with doubts and fears. Perfect your faith—and all of the puzzling bits and pieces of life will fall into place. This is another way of saying: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God—and all these things shall be added unto you."

God is all. Let Him become all in your life. You have worshipped Him, and served Him with a divided heart. This is not enough. "Seek ye first—" that which is of greatest importance. Perhaps you have attended church. Perhaps you have told others of God. But becoming pious is not service to God. Nor is it pleasing to Him. If you have walked a certain way, to impress others, then perhaps you have accomplished this—that some look upon you and call you good. But remember well: God judges the heart, not your pious tone, nor your words, nor so much as your deeds. He is conscious of your heart—and what you have thought. And by the heart, He has judged you. If your heart

is not right, then you have lived in vain, and all of your efforts are futile.

You have gained but little if you have made a good impression on the world around you and have made no impression with God. You have purchased a false face that you have shown the world, and the world has judged it fair. But God has seen behind the mask and knows the real you.

Turn to God—and learn the truth that makes you free. First to know the truth, you must cleanse the heart of all it has known and done before—then you are in a position to learn and accept the truth.

God must live in your heart, so the heart must be cleansed and fit for Him to enter. He must be personalized by you. Harmony in your mind and body is possible, if God dwells within you. The choice is yours. Accept the wisdom, the power, the love and the understanding He offers.

Prayer is a reaching-out to God. A reaching for God. It is communion with God. The words you use in prayer are of less importance than your need, your desire to please Him, to reach Him. Rejoice in His care, His love. Place your life and your sorrows in the Hands of Him. Give thanks for all of the blessings you have known, all you possess now. Rest in the blessed assurance that you are God's, and God is yours!

AGNOSTIC'S EASTER

Easter
and faith have come
and cold winds blow earth's nose,
like ogres, making rude contrast
to Christ.

— *William Walter DeBolt*

PRAYER FOR LENT

Alice Mackenzie Swaim

The outward signs of inward grace,
Illumination on my face,
Serene at every time and place,
Grant me, oh, Lord.

Re-affirmation of Thy love
In earth and sea and sky above,
The gentle wisdom of the dove,
Grant me, oh, Lord.

The purity of heart and mind
So that, in all around I find
Your ordered plan when men are blind,
Grant me, oh, Lord.

Though seas of doubt and care run deep,
Give me a steadfast faith to keep,
A quiet and untroubled sleep,
Grant me, oh, Lord.

FOR MIRACLE

Howard G. Hanson

Stretch, new wings within my heart!
Burst out with strength and tall
as if caged in that somber court
lacked space for miracle.

Flee quick, and think never again
to house in such small room,
Oh straining love, oh stifled wren
past holding, oh hidden name!

LET IT RING!

Freedom is a garment
casually worn by many who,
accustomed to its comforting layers,
become complacent,
unaware of the fragility of its cloth;
countless others,
living in a chill
of fear and oppression,
yearn for its warmth
but see it only from a distance
as it hangs, empty,
upon the display rack.

— *Submitted by: Elinor O. Gray*

RESPONSIBILITY

Heather Hume

To be a responsible person is one of the requirements to living a Christian life. It is our response to the needs of our family, to our neighbors, to our community, to our world. And we need responsible people. The criticism today is that there is not enough responsibility in the world. Not enough responsible caring people!

But to be responsible is a complex matter. It requires the ability of discrimination. We need to know what our particular responsibilities are, and how we can best handle them.

This can be a confusing problem as my dear old lady neighbor next door found out. To her dismay she found responsibilities calling in her conflicting directions. Where was she first responsible? Was it to the friend of long standing who needed her at a distance? Was it to the close young neighbor whom she babysat for so the mother of the fatherless family could work? Was it still to her own family who had an emergency where her nursing abilities were vitally needed?

Most of us don't all of a sudden stumble onto such a complex of calls about which we have conflicting loyalities. For my neighbor this was a serious problem. She sat in my kitchen and asked, "How can I be three different people? Where do I belong?"

The first answer "where do we belong" always is we belong to the greatest need. The needs seemed equal in her particular case. The second answer to "where do we belong" would be where is your love

greatest, for that is where we serve best.

And the third answer to "where do we belong" is the appropriate one that we always belong where our training best and peculiarly fits us to be. This was the answer that applied in my neighbor's case. She was a trained nurse, and in this particular set of choices before her this training was most needed in her own family. Though she had no "close" relatives, it was her nephew in a far city who for a number of months would need careful nursing to recover from a stroke.

Her friend though greatly loved needed companionship; not actual nursing. Though she loved babysitting for the family of children, again her nursing skill was not needed here. And she was *not* three people and could not fill in for three different homes.

We talked this out. She sighed, "I've been selfish. I like being with the children best since I'll never be a grandmother being with them was like having grandchildren." Another sigh, "And though I would like being with my friend, she does have other friends who can help her aloneness. Besides I can keep in contact with her through the phone." And then an ironic smile, "And, of course, my nephew—I know least of all. I've seen him three times in my life—and to tell the truth I am a stranger there. But it is my own brother's son, and I know charity begins at home. He is the only blood tie I have so I guess he is "my home."

And she knew what she must do. She helped the family get another babysitter, stayed long enough to show her the family routine. She made the frequent phone calls to her friend, and she took the first plane off to her nephews.

But she had not known immediately the path of duty and responsibility. We are seldom taught very thoroughly on this subject. And for all of us this confusion can easily arise.

One of the things we ought to understand about responsibility is that there will always be more to be done than we as an individual can do. There will always be more causes that are good and ought to be supported than we can find time for. As one saying goes "There will always be more crosses to die upon, but we must select the particular crosses that are *our own.*"

Now, how do we know which crosses, which causes, are our own? We can't always infallibility know. We can't always make the best choices. None of us have the superhuman wisdom to be unerring always in our selections. We begin by accepting this fact. All we can do is make the best choices we know how at the time, believing that experience will show us how to improve our choices.

As we grow in wisdom we will learn to serve better. We will neglect and serve foolishly at times. This is part of our learning, but if our motives are compassion even our errors are to our credit.

And for a scale of selection about responsibility we simply begin nearest to where we stand. That means our home, our family have first claim to responsibilities laid upon us. Charity and love begin at home. If we are neglectful here, we are not fulfilling a Christlike way of life. We have to begin where we may not always be best appreciated, where we will not receive public acclaim—but home and relations are first call.

And from that center we proceed outward, always taking as the next step the areas closest to us—neighbor, community, etc. But in these choices we can't do everything, and we are entitled to giving of ourselves to the causes that have most interest to us. We also are wise if

we link ourselves to projects where our special skills and training can be most efficiently employed. This is being a good workman—to use our skills in a loving and generous way.

And we shouldn't unduly worry over how we are fulfilling our responsibility. If we do that which our hearts and our hands find called to do, we are responding in the Christian way.

As a matter of fact, if we loved perfectly we would have no problem of selection. The wisdom of love would lead us unerringly and at all times in the right areas to serve.

Our limited hands, our single bodies will not wipe out the pain, the sickness, the evil, and the poverty, the ignorance that the world groans and suffers. They are not meant to. But our prayers, our love, and our faith, plus our willingnesses to do what is nearest—this would!

If we loved well enough we would have no conflict. Love would tell each of us what vineyard our Father calls us to work in. We are never called to do more than our strength and our ability and our time permit us to do.

If we find ourselves in a position where we are swamped and overloaded, then somewhere we have made unwise choices—and it will be up to us to discriminate and make room in our lives.

A too busy life of constant activity of unending duties and responsibilities is not a Christian life. A Christian life has time and makes time for prayer and worship, for play and work.

Knowing our responsibilities, fulfilling them wisely is a Christian discipline we all can learn much from. And love can teach us all the answers we need.

TRIANGLE IN MOTION

Man is a triangle in motion
Warring within itself
Mind-Line soars, feels superior
To Body-Line that holds down form;
But hostile views breed rivalry
While eager Soul-Line appeals to both
On view of self-integration:
Birth of poise, peace, love, joy, salvation.

— *Helen Pisarelli Lombardi*
From MODERN IMAGES

LIFE IS LIKE A JOURNEY

Life is like a journey on a train
With a pair of travelers at each window pane
I may sit beside you all the journey through
Or I may sit elsewhere, never knowing you
But if fate should mark me to sit by your side
Let's be pleasant travelers,
"It's so short a ride."

(By courtesy of Madeleine Hope)

URGENCY TO RESPONSE

Monica Boyce

Like people, the emergence of this hyacinth
keeps growing out of
what it had grown into.

This picture, within a time-frame,
confines to a destiny
uncontrolled by itself.
The urgency to respond
is bursting within this living thing!

What is the key to its identity?
Could this beauty, delightsome fragrance
lead to the recognition of identity?

INVOLVEMENT

Florence B. Unangst

Is it enough to say, "I love"
And merely leave it at that?
Should we not then work with compassion
To show others where "the scene is really at"?

I WOULD PAUSE

Winifred Hamrick Farrar

If I were keeper of the days
And could decree in endless ways—
The budding of the trees in March,
Their spreading limbs to make an arch
Of hope; the cardinals to call
Their lucid notes of cheer to all
Who wait the winter out with pain
And watch for signs that after rain
Comes sun and greening carpets spread
Upon the earth to make the bread
Of man; the role of everything
That lives throughout the world to bring
It blessing: I would pause awhile
In spring to meditate then smile
Before beginning summer heat
And drought to test the spirit, beat
The sturdy sons who labor down
To see them lift themselves from ground.
And fall would bring another pause,
One longer than the first because
The rigors of the winter well
Could wait. In fact, I think farewell
Would be my word to wintertime.
But I am helpless, and the clime
Will be as always, I suppose,
And, after all, I think He knows
The order better than the rest.
Although we chafe, His will is best.

NOTICES and COMMENTS

BOARD MEETING. On Wednesday, February 19, the Board of Trustees of Fellowship in Prayer met for its annual meeting. The meeting was held at the home of the Executive Secretary, Kathryn G. Brown, who served the Trustees an enormous and delicious dinner before they settled down to work.

NEW OFFICERS. At this meeting, a new president was elected to fill that long-vacant position. He is Peter V. K. Funk, of Amityville, New Jersey, who has been a friend—and onetime-officer—of the fellowship for many years. Roland Gammon, elected a Trustee in 1968, was voted to be one of the Vice Presidents of the Board.

NEW TRUSTEE. Harry M. Stevens, of Lima, Ohio, was elected a Trustee of the Board subject to his acceptance, which he graciously consented soon thereafter to give. Mr. Stevens was a friend of the late Harry Halsey Starrett, one of the fellowship's stalwarts, and has expressed interest in carrying on Mr. Starrett's work in gaining attention and interest in the fellowship in his area of the country.

SUMMING UP. Mrs. Samuel Chamberlain, a Vice President of the Board, flew out of and then back into her snowbound home in Marblehead, Massachusetts, to attend the meeting. She could have been speaking for all the Trustees when she said of the meeting, "It was very fine—stimulating, hopeful, full of new ideas." One of

the best ideas to come out of it, in fact, was her generous offer to translate from the original French a series of articles either written or edited by Swami Ritajananda, whose celebrated and beautiful Vedanta center is situated outside Paris. These articles, we trust, will be appearing in successive issues throughout the year.

WESTERN ZONE ADVISOR. The Reverend Henry J. Gernhardt Sr., of Twin Falls, Idaho, formerly one of our advisors in the Western Zone, recently lost his beloved wife. We extend to him our deepest sympathy. And we are grateful to him for writing to us recently, "If you wish to assign me to the Western Zone as an advisor, I shall accept the privilege and responsibility. I know there are several people participating in the Fellowship because of my previous service. . . . The universal inclusive spirit of Fellowship in Prayer is an active spirit and adventure in understanding, unity, and love. This helps to sustain Fellowship in Prayer as a movement and effective influence and power. . . . May the spirit of faith, hope, and love spread comfort, peace, and joy, as we minister and share in practical good deeds and services. Love must be more than words and much talk. Love is empathy and productive energy, deed, and truth." After such an eloquent and generous offer, we happily accepted Reverend Gernhardt to return as an advisor in the Western Zone—and, indeed, hoped that he might offer his ability with words to us some day in the form of an article.

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NEXT TIME THE HURRICANE AND WITH BLOOD ON THE LILACS

Carla Patsuris

Across the spoils of Viet Nam
Past spumes of odium
Over waste and want and grieving
Gentle winds hum

Hum for young and old heroes
Trapped by unpredictable fate
(And gushing life-streams of red)
With hate breeding hate

Then on to thousands of towns
And a legion of rioting throngs
(Where children and lilacs are trampled)
The wind hums her cradle of songs....

Over multiple herds
Of humans distressed and demented
Hums the un-heeded
April wind *spicely* scented.

"For a world united in prayer"

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